



EUROPEAN CENTER FOR LEGAL EDUCATION & RESEARCH

CENTRUL EUROPEAN PENTRU EDUCAȚIE ȘI CERCETARE JURIDICĂ

renew
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6th Conference
Together against Human Trafficking 2020

Human Trafficking in Europe and Its Challenges for Romania

10 December 2020 | Online | 9:30, Brussels (CET)

The banner features a background image of a person's hands bound with thick, grey rope. In the top right corner, there are three logos: the ECLER logo, the FH logo, and a logo with a heart and a scale. The text is in white and blue colors.

FINAL REPORT



1. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

The 6th conference “[Together against Human Trafficking](#)” is focused this year on „*Human Trafficking in Europe and Its Challenges for Romania*”. It has been co-organized by Ramona Strugariu, Member of the European Parliament (RENEW EUROPE), in partnership with the Romanian Network of NGOs against Trafficking in Persons (RoTIP), the European Center for Legal Education and Research (ECLER) and Freedom House Romania (FHR), on the 10th of December, celebrating the International Human Rights Day.

Human trafficking is one of the most urgent political challenges of our global age, being the fastest growing crime as a complex and evolving phenomenon, which exploits people’s dreams for a better future, robs them of their dignity and violates their basic human rights. As the United Nations defines it, human trafficking is essentially a form of modern slavery and, at the same time, the most severe form of human exploitation in the world. There are today more slaves than at any time in our history. Furthermore, [Pope Francis](#) condemns trafficking in human beings as one of the most dramatic manifestations of the “commercialization of the other”, being **a crime against humanity** that disfigures both the victims as well as those who carry it out.

This edition of the conference addresses the European perspectives, in which Romania plays an important role as it has been, for more than 30 years, one of the main global source countries and top 1 in Europe in terms of human trafficking and more recently on organized crime, in general. The large number of Romanian survivors and the incapacity of the Romanian authorities to respond to this phenomenon makes it one of the main, not only individual, but national security threats. Romanians are exploited inside the country and abroad, under all possible forms of exploitation. The European Commission mentioned in its Report published in October 2020 that Romania has the highest number of victims identified in EU and the number of Romanian children increased 10 times. The response of the Romanian Government to this phenomenon [was very weak](#). There are few shelters, all privately funded and the protection of survivors, mainly children, is almost inexistant.

The crime brings huge profits to the criminal networks - thousands of euros/day/person exploited. As parallel financial investigations and money laundering are serious challenge for



the Romanian authorities, the proceeds of crime remain with the trafficking networks that have already created protection links at the institutional level, buying their impunity. The [Tandarei](#) and [Shanghai](#) cases of trafficking in minors have demonstrated that Romanian and Chinese intelligence officers, Supreme Court judges, prosecutors, high-ranked police officers, politicians etc. were directly involved in supporting child trafficking networks in Romania. Also, the criminal networks are better organised and more powerful than the law enforcement authorities in Romania and they infiltrated almost all institutions.

Since 2013, E.C.L.E.R. have played an active role in the field of human trafficking in Romania. Among the main advocacy activities and results of this conference are:

- in the end of the Sixth Edition of this event, we have launched a large **awareness campaign** that reaches the general public, mainly children, youth and their parents in Romania and Diaspora. Also, attendees were invited to join the [International Community: Together Against Human Trafficking](#) – a global platform that gathers experts and actors interested in fight against human trafficking and/or survivors protection. The platform has already 58 members from 13 countries
- the 2018 edition's main result is the working group on the amendments to the national law related to the removal/transplant of human organs in order to combat trafficking in organs
- in the end of the Fourth Edition of this event, our proposal was to have **the issue of illegal organs removal on the public agenda** and to amend the national criminal legislation for a better protection
- the Third Edition reopened the 2016 discussion for an **integrated national strategy on organized crime** in accordance with the 2015 Annual DIOCT (DIICOT) Report
- after the Second Edition, in 2015, the Working Group tried to **amend the national legislation on labour recruiting agencies**
- in the end of the First Edition, organized in 2014, it was launched the **National Independent Working Group on THB and Smuggling**.

2. AIMS OF THE PROJECT

Human trafficking is called the darkest side of humanity as it massively affects the main fundamental rights of the survivors. Our main goal is to promote human rights and human security among vulnerable groups, especially the rights of women and children, thus

stimulating civil society to enhance the rule of law by welcoming citizens participation, offering debates and trainings based on a human rights approach to key stakeholders involved in combating trafficking in persons and protection of the victims.

The conference aims to address the main challenges we face in preventing and combating human trafficking or protecting survivors, especially children, underling the need for effective international cooperation and inter-institutional involvement. Combating trafficking in human beings in the actual transnational context is impossible without a strong international and European cooperation in criminal matters, with an integrated and comprehensive approach. Fighting child trafficking remains the biggest challenge in Europe. According to the current trends identified in the recently published [EU Report on Human Trafficking](#), more and more children become victims of traffickers in Europe, and subject to all kinds of exploitation.

This event is the only annual debate on human trafficking in Romania, developed in order to facilitate a stronger and more coordinated response to trafficking in persons at the national and European levels. The 6th edition addressed the main challenges encountered by the Romanian and EU actors involved in preventing and combating trafficking in persons, as well as the protection of the victims. It promoted, also, the human rights approach to countering trafficking in persons and a better protection of the victims, mainly children. Also, the need for more effective confiscation and anti-money laundering measures were discussed.

3. TARGET GROUP

European magistrates, lawyers, police officers, labour inspectors, civil servants, doctors, researchers and teachers, representatives of NGOs, human trafficking survivors, as well as politicians and foreign diplomats were expected to attend the online event. We planned to have about 500 representatives of the main stakeholders working in the field of human trafficking globally and there were **538 participants**, 281 international and 257 Romanian attendees, covering all continents and 87 countries.

4. THE CONFERENCE WAS STRUCTURED ON 3 DIFFERENT PANELS:

In this context, during the conference we discussed the main European and Romanian challenges against human trafficking under 3 focused panels on security, child protection and

confiscation of proceeds of crime. The presentations delivered by the guest speakers, followed by 1-hour discussion, are available [online](#):

1. PANEL I – IS HUMAN TRAFFICKING A THREAT TO EUROPEAN CITIZENS SECURITY? gathered four international experts who introduced the audience into the topic and presented the main challenges that we face today in the field of human trafficking:
 - Floriana SIPALA, Head of Unit for Organised Crime and Drugs Policy, DG HOME, European Commission
 - Robert ČREPINKO, Head of European Migrant Smuggling Centre (EMSC), EUROPOL
 - Ryszard PIOTROWICZ, 1st Vice President of Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA), Council of Europe
 - Andrew NOBLE, British Ambassador to Romania
2. PANEL II – CHILD PROTECTION AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING: CASES AND WAYS FORWARD gathered 2 international and 2 Romanian experts that presented challenges related to missing children and trafficking in minors as new global challenges:
 - Thi HOANG, JIED Managing Editor, Tech Against Trafficking Research Lead, Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime
 - Gabriela CHAMORRO, Criminal Intelligence Officer, Crimes Against Children Unit, Vulnerable Communities Sub-Directorate, INTERPOL
 - Adriana SAFTOIU, Vice-president of the Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry into the Situation of Missing Children, Member of the Romanian Parliament
 - Oana ȚOIU, Former Secretary of State in the Ministry of Labor and Social Justice in the Technocratic Government
3. PANEL III – CONFISCATION AND MONEY LAUNDERING: MAIN CHALLENGES IN FIGHT AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING gathered 5 international experts that focused on the main institutional cooperation and reform in order to better fight human trafficking. The need for confiscation and anti-money laundering measures was specifically approached by the guest speakers of this panel:
 - Anniina JOKINEN, Senior Programme Officer, The European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control, affiliated with the United Nations (HEUNI)
 - Dan Alexandru POPA, Deputy National Member of Romania to EUROJUST



- Warner TEN KATE, National Public Prosecutor for Trafficking in human Beings and People Smuggling, The Netherlands
- Greg BRISTOL, Founder of The Human Trafficking Investigations & Training Institute (HTITI), Former FBI Special Agent
- Gianina CORNEA, Prosecutor, Directorate for the Investigation of Organized Crime and Terrorism (DIICOT), Romania.

5. RELEVANCE OF THE PROJECT

The conference contributes to the identification of the key challenges regarding the prevention and combating of trafficking in human beings at the national level and addresses this phenomenon as a human rights violation, focusing on the need of prevention and a better protection of the victims in order to successfully prosecute offences of trafficking in person, to confiscate the proceeds of crime and compensate the survivors.

Following the previous outcomes of this event – the establishment of the National Independent Working Group on THB and Smuggling (2014) and its efforts to amend the national legislation on labour recruiting agencies (2015), discussions on the issue of illegal organs removal and better inter-institutional cooperation and better national strategies/laws (2016), discussion for an integrated national strategy on organized crime in accordance with the Romanian obligations under the EU Treaty of Accession and the 2015 Annual DIOCT (DIICOT) Report (2017), the need for a national law regarding the removal of organs and transplants in order to prevent trafficking in organs and trafficking in persons for organs removal (2018) and institutional reform and better awareness campaigns in order to fight and prevent human trafficking, mainly trafficking in children.

Date: December 19, 2020

Silvia Tăbușcă

President,

European Center for Legal Education and Research